



NEWS RELEASE

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**JUNEAU MAN RE-INDICTED BY FEDERAL GRAND JURY ON PREVIOUS CHARGES
OF UNLAWFULLY CATCHING 17,000 POUNDS OF FISH IN FAIRWEATHER GROUNDS,
AND NEW CHARGES OF FALSIFYING IFQ HALIBUT RECORDS**

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Nelson P. Cohen announced today, February 21, 2008, that a federal grand jury in Anchorage added new charges against Robert Becker of Juneau, Alaska, for violating federal fisheries protection laws.

The twelve-count superseding indictment named Becker, age 36, as the sole defendant.

According to the superseding indictment, in February and March, 2005, Becker conspired with others to falsify Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) records, and did falsify a prior Notice of Landing and a Landing Report for 4,000 pounds of halibut. Becker reported the fish on the quota of another IFQ cardholder who was not on board during the fishing as required by federal law. The previous charges still in effect allege that between November, 2004, and January, 2005, Becker made three unlawful fishing trips to the Fairweather Grounds in the Gulf of Alaska and caught a total of approximately 17,000 pounds of fish. During these three fishing trips, the Fairweather Grounds and all of the East Yakutat Section were closed to directed fishing for Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR). However, Becker falsified his fish landing tickets and his DSR logbook to reflect that the fishing took place in other areas that were open to directed fishing for DSR. The total wholesale value of Becker's unlawfully caught fish was nearly \$25,000.

Assistant United States Attorney Stephen Cooper, who presented the case to the grand jury, indicated that the law provides for a maximum sentence per count of five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. Under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed would be based upon the seriousness of the offenses, the retail value of the fish and the prior criminal history, if any, of the defendant.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement conducted the investigation leading to the indictment in this case.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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